



MARICOPA COUNTY
Environmental Services
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CLEAN WOOD BURNING TIPS TO HELP REDUCE POLLUTION

County Ordinance Restricts Fireplace Use on High Pollution Days

(Phoenix)— As the temperature begins to drop and families gather during the holiday season, Valley residents may be wondering if they're allowed to use their fireplaces. The answer is yes, unless the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department (MCESD) has issued a High Pollution Advisory (HPA).

The MCESD issues advisories when pollution levels near the unhealthy range. As part of the Clean Air Act, the Maricopa County Residential Wood Burning Ordinance requires residents to refrain from using all non-EPA-approved wood burning devices during an HPA. Residents who violate the ordinance may be issued a warning for the first offense, get a \$50 fine for a second, and a \$100 fine for any other within a year.

There are four ways homeowners may qualify for an exemption. The exemptions include:

- a residential sole source of heat;
- a temporary sole source of heat;
- an emergency; or
- an inadequate alternative source of heat.

Wood burning alternatives include all wood stoves certified by the EPA after July 1990, any pellet stoves, wood stoves or fireplaces approved by MCESD, and gas burning logs set permanently installed in a wood burning fireplace.

To reduce the amount of pollution wood burning creates, follow these clean burning tips:

- Don't burn firewood or manufactured logs in wood stoves or fireplaces during an HPA.
- Burn only dry wood.
- Build small, hot fires.
- Never burn garbage, wrapping paper, or painted or chemically treated wood.
- Have your chimney inspected and swept by a professional chimney sweep.
- Give your fire generous air supply.
- Watch your chimney for heavy smoke – this means that your wood is not burning efficiently.

While vehicles and industries play a large role in producing air pollution, wood burning can produce up to 40 percent of pollution in a neighborhood. This is due to an air inversion "ceiling" that traps pollutants in the Valley close to the ground and prevents them from blowing away naturally.

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Wood smoke may cause health problems when the tiny particles get inhaled deep in the lungs and can't escape. Young children, the elderly and people with breathing problems are especially at risk because they don't have enough lung capacity to overcome the pollution.

Wood smoke may also lower resistance to infections like pneumonia, and it aggravates bronchitis, asthma, emphysema, and similar diseases in people of all ages. Contact your physician about health effects.

More Information About Wood Burning

For wood burning exemptions, call (602) 506-6700. To make an environmental complaint, call (602) 506-6611. To find out if it's a no-burn day, call the HPA Hotline at (602) 506-6400. For hourly pollution levels, call (602) 258-7505 or go to www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/AIR/airday.asp. Contact the American Lung Association of AZ at (602) 258-7505.

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